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INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
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RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 2201
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUSHANBE 001080

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DEPT FOR SCA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/18/2017

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SUBJECT: OSCE IN DUSHANBE: BORDER MANAGEMENT AND MANDATE ISSUES

CLASSIFIED BY: Tracey Ann Jacobson, Ambassador, U.S. Embassy
Dushanbe, STATE.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

11. (C) Summary: OSCE Head of Center Pryakhin told Ambassador that the Tajik government had approved only one of its four proposed border management programs -- creation of a comprehensive border management strategy -- and deferred the other proposals for further study after the strategy is completed. He is looking for U.S. support for a donor conference, perhaps in the fall, to move the strategy forward. Presidential Advisor for Foreign Policy Rahmatulloyev once again raised the issue of updating the OSCE's mandate in a meeting with Pryakhin yesterday; although the Tajik proposal is always couched in terms of increasing the economic basket but not decreasing the activities in the human dimension, Pryakhin remains suspicious of Tajik motivations and will follow a "go slow" approach. Pryakhin will be seeking U.S. support in identifying an "energetic, experienced American" who can run an expanded economic/environmental program. End Summary.

GREEN LIGHT FOR STRATEGY

12. (C) Pryakhin said he'd had good conversations with the Russian Border Guard advisors in Dushanbe on the border management project, which they had agreed, on instructions from Moscow, to support. This Russian approval was an important factor in President Rahmon's decision to go forward with this project, Pryakhin believes. Pryakhin initially proposed an OSCE-sponsored conference in the fall, with the various major donors each presenting a vision or paper on its proposals for a border management strategy. Ambassador suggested that such a conference could result in a variety of competing visions, which would not be effective in moving forward. She proposed instead that OSCE Senior Border Management Advisor Henry Bolten should conduct consultations with the host government and major donors to come up with a coordinated OSCE draft to which donors and the government could react. Pryakhin noted that this would require "a lot of preparatory work" but agreed that it would be more productive in terms of getting the Tajiks to sign onto a strategy donors could support.

BUT NO GO FOR OTHER PROJECTS

13. (C) Ambassador Pryakhin detected the hand of Russia in the decision not to accept the three other projects, noting that "the Tajiks are weak in this area, and when they don't know what to do, they ask Russia." He said the language in the Tajik note

verbale accepting the strategy project but not the others reflected almost verbatim what he had heard from the Russian border guards on some of the proposals, particular the objection to a project on border guard training. Copies of all four projects as well as the Tajik government's Note Verbale have been emailed to SCA/CEN and USOSCE DCM.

LEERY OF AFGHANISTAN

14. (C) Pryakhin noted that throughout his meetings, he has sensed a strong Tajik government reluctance to engage with the Afghans on border security, or to have Afghan participation in OSCE border management projects. He sees various causes for this, including basic mistrust, Tajik-Pashtun rivalries, and Russian concerns about letting Afghans into what it still sees as its backyard. Both Tajik and Russian interlocutors have told him that admitting Afghans into the country, even for training, could be "destabilizing" as many Afghans "support an extremist ideology." Ambassador noted that border management projects can succeed fully only if they address both sides of the border. Afghan participation not only makes sense from a practical security angle, but also in terms of securing additional donor funding for OSCE border management projects in Tajikistan. Pryakhin promised to raise this point in his upcoming meetings with Foreign Minister Zarifi and State Committee on National Security Chair Abdurahimov.

MANDATE

15. (C) During a meeting with Pryakhin yesterday, Presidential Foreign Policy Advisor Rahmatulloyev once again raised President Rahmon's desire to "update" the OSCE Center's mandate, insisting that the OSCE's work on economic development is a Tajik government priority. Although Rahmatulloyev said expansion of the economic area would not come at the expense of either of the other two dimensions, Pryakhin remains highly suspicious, noting

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that he expects the Tajiks to "chip away" at human dimension projects. He is therefore "not in a hurry" to move forward on adjusting the mandate, despite a suggestion from Vienna that he form some sort of working group to address this issue quickly.

STAFFING

16. (C) Pryakhin noted that an expanded economic project office would require effective leadership -- an energetic, experience person with a proven track record in both economic development and effective project management. He prefers an American, but notes that the current U.S. citizen Economic Advisor "is not up to the task." (NOTE: We had heard this previously from the OSCE Deputy Head and don't disagree. END NOTE.) Pryakhin plans to forward a vacancy announcement soon and has asked for U.S. assistance in identifying an appropriate candidate.

17. (C) Comment: Ambassador Pryakhin will be in Vienna August 1 and is looking for a meeting with Ambassador Finley to discuss these issues. Despite his short tenure here, we find him to be credible, sharp, and committed to cooperation on all three OSCE areas, despite host country preferences to focus on economics first, security second, and the human dimension less and less. End Comment.

JACOBSON